

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1654

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 WELLINGTON 2613

FOR IO/OIC - BURGESS; EA/ANP - NELSON FROM VIHIL

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, SPC

SUBJECT: SPC PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE, NOUMEA,

JULY 5-9, 1976

SUMMARY: ISLAND GOVERNMENTS AND TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATIONS
PRESENTED LIST OF PROJECTS, IN OWN ORDER OF PRIORITY, FOR
THE FIRST TIME, AS BASIS FOR WORK PROGRAM. FURTHER STEPS
TOWARD REFORM OF SPC AWAIT CONFERENCE ACTION ON NAURU
REVIEW COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS. TWENTY PERCENT INCREASE
OVER 1976 BUDGET USED AS BASIS FOR PLANNING ONLY, FOR 1977.
END SUMMARY.

1. THE DOG HAS BEGUN TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER ITS
TAIL. ALTHOUGH THE WAGGING IS STILL SOMEWHAT ERRATIC.
AT THE P AND E COMMITTEE MEETING, DELEGATIONS WERE
UNANIMOUS ON THE NEED TO GIVE URGENT PRIORITY TO
IMPLEMENTING THE NAURU REVIEW COMMITTEE'S
RECOMMENDATIONS, AND TO EFFECT ECONOMIES IN THE SPC
ADMINISTRATION. AFTER REPEATED MEETINGS OF AN AD HOC
COMMITTEE OF ISLAND GOVERNMENTS, ISLAND REPRESENTATIVES,
FOR THE FIRST TIME, PRESENTED A DETAILED LIST OF PROJECTS,
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IN THEIR OWN ORDER OF PRIORITY. MOST WERE PREPARED

CONSTRUCTIVELY TO CRITICIZE WHENEVER THE
EMPHASES OF THE PAST WERE NOT IN ACCORD WITH THEIR
OWN WISHES.

2. FROM A POLITICAL VIEWPOINT, THEN, IT WAS A USEFUL
MEETING, AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TAKEN BY MEMBER
GOVERNMENTS AUGURS WELL FOR A REORGANIZED SPC. THAT
ISLAND GOVERNMENTS STILL FORESEE TO RESHAPE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PRIORITIES AND TO COOPERATE WITH
(AND NOT DUPLICATE) THE WORK OF OTHER REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS, WAS SHOWN IN THEIR WILLINGNESS INDIVIDUALLY
TO CONSIDER COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO A TWENTY PERCENT
INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF THEIR OWN VOLUNTARY CONTRI-
BUTIONS. THE ISLAND GOVERNMENTS APPEAR TO HAVE ACCEPTED
THAT THIS IS THEIR ORGANIZATION AND THEY
SEEM PREPARED NOW TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY GUIDANCE
AND LEADERSHIP. FIJI IN PARTICULAR CAME OUT STRONGLY
IN SUPPORT OF A REVITALIZED SPC.

3. THE AUSTRALIANS HAD A LIBERAL BRIEF AND WERE,
AS A RESULT, THE MOST FORTHCOMING OF THE METROPOLITANS.
THEY SUPPORTED A TWENTY PERCENT INCREASE IN THE BUDGET
PROVIDED THE NAURU REVIEW COMMITTEE (NRC) RECOMMENDATIONS
WERE IMPLEMENTED. FRANCE WAS ALSO FORTHCOMING, REP
INDICATED INFORMALLY HIS HOPE THAT FRANCE WOULD BE ABLE
TO MAKE A LARGER VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION IN 1977. THE
UK AND NZ DELEGATIONS WERE MORE RESTRAINED, LIKE USG,
BELIEVING THIS TO BE A TIME FOR CONSOLIDATION AND
CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NRC
RECOMMENDATIONS. USG REP STATED US PREPARED TO CONSIDER
A "SIGNIFICANT INCREASE" IN THE 1977 BUDGET, BUT
THAT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO DISCUSS AMOUNT UNTIL WORK
PROGRAM FOR 1977 PRESENTED AND REVIEWED. USG REP FURTHER
STATED US "COMMITTEE TO A CONSTRUCTIVE AND OPTIMISTIC
APPROACH TOWARD THE FUTURE OF THE SPC." THE UK WOULD
PREFER TO SUPPORT THE EXISTING BUDGET INCREASED FOR
INFLATION ONLY (FIFTEEN PERCENT). NZ UNWILLING TO MAKE
A COMMITMENT ON A POSSIBLE INCREASE; SPOKE AGAINST ARBITRARY
TWENTY PERCENT INCREASE.

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4. WHILE MANY DELEGATIONS, BOTH METROPOLITAN AND
REGIONAL, WERE UNABLE TO MAKE A FIRM COMMITMENT TO A
BUDGETARY INCREASE, THE MOOD OF THE MEETING
WAS IN FAVOR OF A TWENTY PERCENT INCREASE, AND THIS IS
THE PLANNING FIGURE WHICH WILL BE PUT TO THE
SIXTEENTH CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER.

5. THE SECRETARIAT PLAYED AN AMBIVALENT ROLE. MOST OF THE OBSTACLES AND PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONTED THE MEETING CAME OUT OF THE SECRETARIAT'S RELUCTANCE TO PREPARE CONFERENCE DOCUMENTATION IN LINE WITH THE NRC RECOMMENDATIONS, AND TO REACT SWIFTLY TO THE MOOD OF THE MEETING. ONNCE THE UNANIMOUS VIEW OF THE ISLAND GOVERNMENTS BECAME APPARENT, THE SECRETARIAT WAS CONSTRUCTIVE AND HELPFUL.

6. IN MANY WAYS, HOWEVER, THIS WAS FOR THEM A THEORETICALEXERCISE. THERE HAVE AS YET BEEN NO ADMINISTRATIVE CUTS AND NO STAFF REDU TIONS. IT WILL NOT BE UNTIL THE FORTHCOMING MANAGEMENT SERVICES REVIEW IS COMPLETED AND THE REVISED WORK PROGRAM BEGINS TO COME INTO EFFECT, THAT THE BITE WILL BE FELT AND THE WILL OF THE SECRETARIAT WILL REALLY BE PUT TO THE TEST. THE LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF MANY OF THE P AND E COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ARE NOT IMMEDIATELY APPARENT.

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7. WHERE THIS MEETING FELL DOWN WAS IN DOING ITS ASSIGNED TASK OF PROJECT EVALUATION, AND IN PREPARING A VIABLE, INTEGRATED WORK PROGRAM. THE FAILURE OF THE SECRETARIAT TO PREPARE USEFUL DOCUMENTATION IN TIME, THE PREOCCUPATION

OF DELEGATES WITH ENSURING THAT THE NAURU MOMENTUM WAS MAINTAINED, AND THE NEED TO AWAIT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF NEXT MONTH'S MANAGEMENT STUDY, MEANT THAT THE DRAFT WORKING PROGRAM WHICH THIS COMMITTEE ADOPTED AND LEFT BEHIND WITH THE SECRETARIAT IS STILL FULL OF ANOMALIES AND POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE HEADACHES. IT PROVIDES THE SECRETARIAT WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO BACKSLIDE SHOULD IT SO DESIRE. IT IS ALSO NOT UNLIKELY THAT ISLAND GOVERNMENTS, ON REFLECTION MAY WANT TO CHANGE THE AGREED ORDER OR PROJECT PRIORITY BETWEEN NOW AND OCTOBER. IN OTHER WORDS, MUCH OF THE REAL WORK OF THE P AND E COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS (CRPG) REMAINS TO BE DONE. THE FEW DAYS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE SIXTEENTH CONFERENCE, THEREFORE, PROMISE TO BE FRENZIED FOR THE ADVANCE GUARD OF DELEGATES, AS THEY RECONVENE TO PREPARE AND APPROVE CONFERENCE DOCUMENTATION.

8. WHERE DOES ALL THIS LEAVE THE SPC? CLEARLY IT IS UNCLASSIFIED

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ENTERING A NEW ERA, ONE IN WHICH THE ISLAND GOVERNMENTS WILL SET THE PRIORITIES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR WON NEED AND EVALUATIONS. ONE IN WHICH THE ISLAND GOVERNMENTS APPEAR PREPARED TO CONSTRUCT AND SUPERVISE THE SECRETARIAT, AND ONE IN WHICH ALL THE METROPOLITANS WILL TAKE THE BACK SEAT. THERE IS STILL A NEED FOR FURTHER RATIONALIZATION OF EFFORT AND INCREASED COOPERATION BETWEEN SPC AND THE REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ UNIVERSITIES. HOWEVER, THE CONCEPT OF A POSSIBLE MERGER BETWEEN SPC AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC BUREAU FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION (SPEC) DID NOT GAIN MOMENTUM AT THIS MEETING. THE IDEA IS CERTAINLY NOT VIEWED WITH ANY FAOVR BY AUSTRALIA OR FRANCE. IT IS NZ THAT IS PROMOTING SPEC AT THE POSSIBLE EXPENSE OF SPC, BUT IT IS APPARENTLY NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE PREVAILING VIEW OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC GOVERNMENTS AND TERRITORIES.

9. NEW ZEALAND ANNOUNCED AT THE MEETING ITS INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SKIPJACK TUNA ASSESSMENT PROGRAM BY CONTRIBUTING NZ\$360,000 OVER THREE YEARS, IF THE PROJECT GOES AHEAD. ALTHOUGH THE WORK PROGRAM AND SPECIAL PROJECTS HAVE BEEN COMBINED IN THE NEW ORDER, THERE REMAINS A PLACE FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO CERTAIN FREE-STANDING MAJOR PROJECTS SUCH AS THE SKIPJACK TUNA PROGRAM AUSTRALIA AND FRANCE EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO MAKE ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS, NEW ZEALAND MADE NO COMMITMENT.

10. THE CRPG ALSO MET, AND WILL RECONVENE AGAIN PRIOR TO

THE CONFERENCE. BEFORE THEN, THE AUSTRALIANS ARE TO PREPARE A PAPER ON THE NECESSARY LEGAL STEPS THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE FORMAL ABOLITION OF MULTIPLE VOTING. THEY ALSO RAISED AT THE MEETING THE QUESTION OF ABOLISHING THE CRPG ALTOGETHER BUT, SURPRISINGLY, BOTH WESTERN SAMOA AND FIJI SPOKE ELOQUENTLY IN FAVOR OF ITS RETENTION ON THE BASIS THAT THE PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS SHOULD RETAIN CONTROL OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET.

11. THE COMMITTEE ELECTED THE REPRESENTATIVE OF FRENCH POLYNESIA, MR. VANFASSE, AS VICE CHAIRMAN.

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12. THE US SERVED ON THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE ALONG WITH FIJI, GUAM, NZ, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, TONGA AND WALLIS AND FUTUNA.

13. THE PEACE CORPS OFFERED TO PROVIDE VOLUNTEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION PROJECTS IN COUNTRIES WHERE THE PEACE CORPS IS ALREADY ESTABLISHED.

14. THE TWO THEMES CHOSEN FOR THE SIXTEENTH CONFERENCE ARE (1) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT; AND (2) REGIONALISM: MEANS TO FURTHER CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES BETWEEN ISLAND NATIONS AND TERRITORIES.

15. THE CRPG WILL MEET OCTOBER 18-19 AND THE CONFERENCE OCTOBER 20-27.
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